

Washington, D.C. - In support of the small businesses and middle-class families in the 8th District and around the country who face challenging economic times, Congresswoman Melissa Bean (IL-08) is advocating for inclusion of several measures in the upcoming economic stimulus package. These measures target middle-class families, small businesses, and long term infrastructure improvements, while also working to restore the fiscal health of our government once the crisis has passed.

“These are dire times. We need to take bold, but well-reasoned actions,” said Bean, a member of the House Financial Services Committee and Vice-Chair of the pro-growth New Democrat Coalition. “Focusing our efforts on middle-class earners, small business, and infrastructure improvements will mean we’re not just stimulating the economy for the short term, we’re making long-term improvements in our ability to compete on a global stage.”

Bean is working with her colleagues, Congressional leadership, and the incoming Obama Administration to advance each of the following ideas:

Small business debt restructuring: Congresswoman Bean chaired meetings in the Small Business Committee’s Subcommittee on Tax and Finance last year that revealed the severely adverse impact that tightening credit markets have on small businesses, many of which have been forced to close. Bean has worked to expand the Small Business Administration’s 7a loan programs, which are currently used for expansion, but not restructuring debt. Providing business owners with access to affordable capital will help them better weather the recession and keep their employees on the payroll.

Job retention: To help businesses maintain cash flow and keep their employees on payroll, Bean and her New Dem colleagues are proposing to alter tax law to allow businesses to retroactively spread out this year’s losses. Under present law, businesses with a net-operating loss this year may amend their tax filings to carry that loss back two years to offset taxable income in such years, so they can “smooth out” swings in business income. As Bean previously proposed in her 2008 GROW Act, H.R. 5107, an expansion of the carry back to five years would allow previously profitable businesses that are now suffering to maintain their staffing levels and invest more.

Stability in health coverage: With unemployment climbing at a dramatic pace, America faces a

surge in the ranks of families without health insurance. Bean introduced the Health Insurance Stability Act, H.R. 7010 as part of the Democratic Middle Class Working Group last year to make bridge insurance more accessible to those who have lost their jobs and cannot afford to keep their COBRA coverage. COBRA monthly premiums average \$700 per family, and the Health Insurance Stability Act would provide an advanceable tax credit of up to \$4,000 to families enrolled in COBRA to offset these costs.

Green building renovation: Encouraging development of green jobs is key to the long-term viability of our economy. A provision introduced last year by Congresswoman Bean as part of her Green Innovation Initiative would provide tax incentives to commercial building owners to replace their heating and air conditioning systems with more energy efficient models. In addition to the environmental benefits, it would provide jobs for the thousands of manufacturers, engineers, and contractors needed to upgrade commercial building HVAC systems.

Energy infrastructure: As advocated by Bean and her colleagues on the New Democrat Coalition's Energy Task Force, investment in a modernized, "smart" power grid will provide next-generation green jobs and is a necessary first step towards launching a larger green economy. Modernization of our power infrastructure will set the stage for stimulating private investment in wind, solar, geothermal and other renewable energy sources.

Entitlement reform: With annual government deficits expected to top \$1 trillion, the federal government's financial position can only be improved through systemic reform to government programs. Congresswoman Bean last year cosponsored H.R. 3654, the Securing America's Future Economy (SAFE) Commission Act, to establish an independent, bipartisan commission to investigate reforms to our nation's entitlement programs and federal budgeting process. While spending is needed in the short term to stimulate the economy, systemic reforms are necessary to get our nation on track to long-term fiscal responsibility.